

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 01787 01 OF 04 111508Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 BERLIN 01787

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T (P A R A 4 .)

FOR DEP ASST SECRETARY GOODBY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: SCUL, PGOV, GE, US
SUBJECT: PAUL STRAND EXHIBIT PROBLEM: USE OF
AMBASSADOR'S TITLE

REF: BERLIN 826

SUMMARY: IN DISCUSSIONS MARCH 9 AND 10 WITH
EMBOFFS, KULTURBUND AND MFA OFFICIALS
HAVE INSISTED ON THE FORMULATION "AMBASSADOR OF
THE USA IN THE GDR" AS THE TITLE FOR THE AMBASSADOR
IN INVITATIONS TO BE PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE
KULTURBUND FOR THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE PAUL
STRAND EXHIBIT. WE HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THIS IS
NOT THE AMBASSADOR'S PROPER TITLE, BUT WOULD BE
PREPARED TO ACCEPT "AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" AS
AN ALTERNATIVE WHICH, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD
NOT DO DAMAGE TO EITHER SIDES' POSITION. MFA
USA DESK OFFICER ELM STATED THIS WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE
SINCE IT IS CONTRARY TO THE KULTURBUND'S PRACTICE.
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PAGE 02 BERLIN 01787 01 OF 04 111508Z

AS A LAST ALTERNATIVE, WE SUGGESTED NO NAMES AND
TITLES IN THE INVITATION, AND ELM SAID THAT THIS
MAY BE THE WAY THINGS WOULD WORK OUT, INDICATING
THE ISSUE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THE KULTURBUND.
THIS MESSAGE OUTLINES POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION,
INCLUDING THE THREAT OF CANCELLATION OF THE EXHIBIT --
WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN MARCH 22 -- IF THE GDR IS

NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT A REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE, AND REQUESTS GUIDANCE BY OOB MARCH 13 IF AT ALL POSSIBLE IN CONNECTION WITH FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH GDR OFFICIALS TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. PAO MET MARCH 9 WITH KULTURBUND'S DR. MERTINK TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS ON PROGRESS OF ADVANCE PREPARATIONS FOR PAUL STRAND EXHIBIT OPENING MARCH 22. POUCH HAD ALSO JUST BROUGHT CONTRACT FROM PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM AND INFORMATION FROM ICS THAT CABLE FROM ALTES MUSEUM AGREEING TO TERMS WAS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO RELEASE EXHIBIT FOR SHIPMENT FROM AMSTERDAM TO BERLIN. (THIS PROVED TO BE INACCURATE SINCE EXHIBIT ARRIVED SAME EVENING.)
2. AFTER APPROVAL OF POSTERS, BROCHURES AND INVITATION LISTS, PAO ASKED STATUS OF INVITATION TEXT, SPECIFICALLY PHRASE DESCRIBING AMBASSADOR, WHO WILL DELIVER REMARKS AT OPENING, AS BEING AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE GDR (SIC). FOCUSING ON THE FINAL PHRASE, MERTINK SAID HE HAD TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT PAO'S OBJECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE LAST WEEK THAT PHRASE BE CHANGED TO READ "TO THE GDR," OR, THAT PHRASE BE DELETED ENTIRELY.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BERLIN 01787 01 OF 04 111508Z

3. MERTINK SAID KULTURBUND PRESIDUM HAD REJECTED BOTH RECOMMENDATIONS. MERTINK SAID PRESIDUM DECLARED MATTER TO BE ONE OF PRINCIPLE AND THAT PHRASE WAS NORMAL FORMULATION FOR ALL AMBASSADORS, "ESPECIALLY THOSE OF THE THREE WESTERN ALLIES IN THE GDR." PAO SAID THIS DID NOT CORRESPOND TO INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY AND THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES COULD WE ACCEPT SUCH FORMULATION. MERTINK SAID KULTURBUND POSITION UNCHANGEABLE, OBSERVING ALSO THAT MFA HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED. MEETING ENDING WITH AGREEMENT TO COMMUNICATE FOLLOWING DAY AT EARLIEST TIME IN ORDER GET PRINTER WORKING ON INVITATIONS. MEANWHILE, THE EXHIBIT ARRIVED FROM AMSTERDAM.
4. THE INVITATION IN QUESTION DOUBLES ALSO AS THE PROGRAM FOR THE OFFICIAL CEREMONIAL OPENING OF THE EXHIBIT, AND IS A FOLD-OVER LEAFLET ON PAGE ONE OF WHICH IS THE INSIGNIA OF THE KULTURBUND WITH THE SINGLE WORD INVITATION; PAGE TWO HAS THE NAME OF THE EXHIBIT AND THE TWO SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS, THAT IS KULTURBUND AND PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM.

PAGE THREE ANNOUNCES THE DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF THE EXHIBIT OPENING, FOLLOWED BY THE NAMES OF THE TWO SPEAKERS - "DR. GERHARD MERTINK, MEMBER OF THE PRESIDUM AND NATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE KULTURBUND OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC" AND "DAVID B. BOLEN, EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE GDR." THE INVITATION IS SIGNED BY PROF. HANS PISCHNER, PRESIDENT (OF THE KULTURBUND). THE INVITATION WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE APPROXIMATELY 200 GUESTS FROM GDR MINISTRIES, CULTURAL INSITUTIONS, MEDIA, AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS.

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 01787 02 OF 04 111438Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 BERLIN 01787

5. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING DEVELOPMENT, AND AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR AND PAO, DCM PAID CALL MARCH 10 ON GDR MFA USA DESK OFFICER ELM TO DISCUSS MATTER OF WORDING OF INVITATION. DCM NOTED WE WERE PLEASED BY THE COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE DISPLAYED BY BOTH SIDES IN PREPARATIONS FOR PAUL STRAND EXHIBIT, WHICH WOULD BE OUR FIRST CULTURAL PROGRAM SINCE ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. THE EXHIBIT HAD, IN FACT, ALREADY ARRIVED IN BERLIN. HOWEVER, A PROBLEM HAD DEVELOPED IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORDING OF THE KULTURBUND'S INVITATION, A PROBLEM WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO RESOLVE WITH THE AIM OF MOVING AHEAD WITH THE SHOWING OF THE EXHIBIT. THE PROBLEM WAS THE WORDING OF THE AMBASSADOR'S TITLE ON THE KULTURBUND'S INVITATION, WHICH READS (IN GERMAN) "AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE GDR." AS ELM KNEW, THE FORMULATION WE USE IS "TO THE GDR."

THE DCM NOTED THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S LETTER OF CREDENCE USES THIS TERM, AS DO THE EMBASSY'S SEALS, WHICH STATE "EMBASSY OF THE USA TO THE GDR." WHILE WE REALIZED THE GDR HAD A DIFFERENT POSITION, WE WERE NOT TAKING ISSUE WITH THE TITLES OF THE GDR OFFICIALS ON THE PROGRAM, AND AT THE SAME TIME
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BERLIN 01787 02 OF 04 111438Z

WOULD EXPECT THEM TO ACCEPT WHAT IS IN FACT THE PROPER TITLE OF THE US AMBASSADOR. THIS WOULD TRANSLATE INTO GERMAN AS "ZU DER DDR," AND NOT "IN DER DDR," WHICH WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO US, AS ELM WELL KNEW. AND, CONTRARY TO WHAT THE KULTURBUND OFFICIAL HAD SAID, IT WAS NOT THE PRACTICE FOR THE THREE WESTERN AMBASSADORS TO BE REFERRED TO AS "IN THE GDR."

6. ELM, WHO PROFESSED NOT TO KNOW ABOUT THE ISSUE, SAID THAT IT WAS CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE TO REFER TO AN AMBASSADOR AS AMBASSADOR TO A PARTICULAR COUNTRY. AT THE SAME TIME, AN AMBASSADOR WAS "IN A COUNTRY." IT DID NOT SOUND RIGHT IN GERMAN TO SAY "TO THE GDR"; ON THE CONTRARY "IN THE GDR" WAS THE NORMAL TERMINOLOGY. WHILE THEY HAD NO DESIRE TO CAUSE PROBLEMS, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT RECOMMEND TO OR FORCE THE KULTURBUND TO MODIFY ITS PRACTICE. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE US AND GDR HAD DIFFERENT POSITIONS ON THE ISSUE, ELM SAID WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT THE GDR TO MODIFY ITS POSITION OR THE PRACTICE THE KULTURBUND FOLLOWS.

7. DCM RESPONDED, SAYING THAT SINCE ELM HAD ACKNOWLEDGED IT WAS CUSTOMARY TO REFER TO AN AMBASSADOR AS "TO A COUNTRY," THE PROBLEM COULD SIMPLY BE RESOLVED BY TRANSLATING THIS INTO GERMAN AS "ZU DER DDR." FURTHERMORE, WE WOULD EXPECT THE KULTURBUND, AS HOST, TO ACCEPT THE AMBASSADOR'S PROPER TITLE. ELM SAID HE COULD NOT AGREE, FOR THE REASONS HE HAD GIVEN.

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PAGE 03 BERLIN 01787 02 OF 04 111438Z

8. NOTING THAT MUCH WORK HAD ALREADY BEEN DONE BY BOTH SIDES, AND WITH THE AIM OF FINDING A SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES, THE DCM SUGGESTED

AS ALTERNATIVE WORDING "AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE USA" (FYI - A FORMULATION
WHICH AMBASSADOR, PAO AND DCM HAD DISCUSSED AND FELT
WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE IN THE EVENT THE GDR WOULD NOT
BUDGE ON "ZU DER DDR" END FYI.) THIS FORMULATION
WOULD RESERVE BOTH SIDES' POSITIONS AND WOULD NOT DO
DAMAGE TO EITHER SIDE. IN THIS CONNECTION, DCM SHOWED
ELM INSERT PAGES TO GDR DIPLOMATIC LIST, WHICH REFER
TO AMBASSADORS AS BEING FROM COUNTRIES BUT WITHOUT
REFERENCE TO BEING "IN THE GDR." ELM SAID WHILE
THAT WAS THE CASE, THE LIST ITSELF SAID
"THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN THE GDR." DCM ACKNOWLEDGED
THIS WAS THE CASE, BUT SAID THAT IN THE LIST
ITSELF AMBASSADORS WERE NOT REFERRED TO AS BEING
"IN THE GDR", AND THAT IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE AN
ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE IF BOTH SIDES WERE SINCERELY
LOOKING FOR AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. ELM
SAID HE COULD NOT AGREE, GIVEN THE PRACTICE OF THE
KULTURBUND.

9. IN REPLY, DCM SAID HE WOULD REPORT THE CONVERSATION
IN THE EMBASSY, INDICATING THAT IT DID NOT APPEAR
POSSIBLE TO ARRIVE AT A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE COMPROMISE,
SINCE THERE WAS NO FLEXIBILITY ON THE PART OF THE
GDR. ELM SAID HE WOULD NOT SO CHARACTERIZE THE GDR'S
POSITION, WHICH WAS A CONSTRUCTIVE ONE AS WELL AS OF
PRINCIPLE.

10. DCM RESPONDED THAT, GIVEN THE POSITION ELM WAS

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 01787 03 OF 04 111348Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CU-04 L-03 CPR-01 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 BERLIN 01787

TAKING, THE PROJECT APPEARED TO BE IN SERIOUS DIFFICULTY,
WHICH WAS A SHAME CONSIDERING THE AMOUNT OF WORK BOTH
SIDES HAD DEVOTED TO IT. WHILE HARDLY A SATISFACTORY

SOLUTION, THE DCM NOTED THAT PERHAPS A WAY OUT THE QUESTION WOULD BE NOT TO HAVE THE NAMES/TITLES OF EITHER THE GDR OR US SPEAKERS ON THE INVITATION. FYI. THE AMBASSADOR, PAO, AND DCM HAD AGREED THAT THIS ALTERNATIVE COULD ALSO BE FLOATED IF THERE WAS NO GIVE ON THE GDR SIDE. END FYI. ELM RESPONDED, SAYING THAT EVENTUALLY THIS MIGHT BE THE WAY OUT AND SAID THE MATTER SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THE KULTURBUND. DCM SAID HE REGRETTED THAT THE GDR HAD NOT SHOWN GREATER FLEXIBILITY, AND THAT HE WOULD REPORT THE RESULTS OF THE CONVERSATION TO THE AMBASSADOR.

11. PAO'S EFFORTS TO CONTACT MERTINK AT KULTURBUND AFTER THE DCM-ELM MEETING WERE UNSUCCESSFUL, EVEN THOUGH MERTINK WAS AWARE WHEN MEETING AT MFA WOULD TAKE PLACE AND HE HAD SAID HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO PAO BETWEEN 4 AND 5 P.M.

12. COMMENT: THE BOTTLE OF PREPOSITIONS ON "TO THE GDR" AND "IN THE GDR" HAS BEEN WITH US SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS IN LATE 1974. BOTH SIDES HAVE, IN EFFECT, AGREED TO DISAGREE. BOTH US AMBASSADORS WERE ACCREDITED "TO THE GDR." OUR NOTES TO THE MFA USE THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BERLIN 01787 03 OF 04 111348Z

FORMULATION "TO THE GDR". THEY ARE ACCEPTED BY THE MFA. THE MFA'S NOTES TO US USE THE FORMULATION EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE GDR. WE HAVE ACCEPTED SUCH NOTES. THE DIPLOMATIC AUSWEISES THE MFA ISSUES TO ALL DIPLOMATS INDICATE THE BEARER IS "IN THE GDR."

13. THE PAUL STRAND EXHIBIT IS THE FIRST OFFICIAL U.S. CULTURAL PRESENTATION SINCE ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. IT IS, THEREFORE, THE FIRST TIME THE ISSUE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S TITLE HAS BECOME INVOLVED IN A PUBLIC FUNCTION IN WHICH WE HAVE A DIRECT ROLE, AS DISTINCT FROM EAST GERMAN MEDIA REFERRING TO THE AMBASSADOR AS BEING "IN THE GDR."

14. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONDUCT OUR RELATIONS IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH OUR FOUR-POWER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BERLIN AND AT THE SAME TIME TO PURSUE THE OTHER GOALS/OBJECTIVES WHICH HAVE BEEN SET FOR US-GDR RELATIONS. IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND AWARE OF THE POSSIBLE PRECEDENT-SETTING NATURE FOR OTHER CULTURAL PROGRAMS WE MAY PUT-ON, WE WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS ON THE MATTER OF THE AMBASSADOR'S TITLE:

(A) CANCEL THE EXHIBIT IF THE GDR INSISTS ON THE "IN THE GDR" FORMULATION. THIS COURSE OF ACTION WOULD

INVOLVE A FINANCIAL LOSS TO US OF \$3,500, AND COULD CAUSE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEMS WITH THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM, WHICH WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE "BATTLE OF THE PRE-POSITIONS." THE GDR WOULD PRESUMABLY SUFFER A FINANCIAL LOSS, AND COULD MAKE FUTURE PROGRAMMING MORE DIFFICULT. BUT WE WOULD HAVE MADE CLEAR TO THE GDR THAT A BASIC PRINCIPLE IS INVOLVED, AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED. WE
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PAGE 03 BERLIN 01787 03 OF 04 111348Z

THINK A BASIC PRINCIPLE IS INVOLVED ALSO AS FAR AS THE GDR IS CONCERNED, AND TEND TO THINK THEY ARE NOT PREPARED TO YIELD TO OUR FORMULATION OF "TO THE GDR."

(B) REQUEST THE KULTURBUND/MFA TO ELIMINATE "IN" OR "TO" FROM THE AMBASSADOR'S TITLE, AND CANCEL THE EXHIBIT IF THE GDR DOES NOT CONCUR. THIS ALTERNATIVE WOULD APPEAR TO OFFER FLEXIBILITY TO BOTH SIDES WITHOUT DAMAGING THEIR POSITIONS OF PRINCIPLE. IT WOULD ALSO BE CONSISTENT WITH WORDING WE HAVE USED HERE IN THE PAST AND TO WHICH THE GDR HAS NOT TAKEN EXCEPTION.

(C) REQUEST THE KULTURBUND TO DELETE FROM THE INVITATION THE NAMES/TITLES OF THE GERMAN AND US SPEAKERS. THIS WOULD AVOID THE PROBLEM OF TITLES. AT THE SAME TIME, IT MAY BE CONTRARY TO KULTURBUND PRACTICE AND THEY MAY FEEL THAT WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO TELL THEM WHAT SHOULD BE IN THEIR INVITATION SINCE THEY ARE THE HOST. FROM OUR STANDPOINT, THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE A DEMEANING SOLUTION FOR THE POSITION OF A US AMBASSADOR, WHO HAS IN FACT BEEN REQUESTED BY THE KULTURBUND TO MAKE REMARKS AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING. IT WOULD ALSO SEEM TO SET A BAD PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE PROGRAMS WE MAY CONDUCT HERE INVOLVING THE AMBASSADOR.

(D) PROPOSE TO THE KULTURBUND THAT THE INVITATION MERELY INDICATE WHEN THE OPENING WILL TAKE PLACE AND THAT THERE BE NO SPEECHES BY US AND GDR REPRESENTATIVES; A PRESS PREVIEW, FOLLOWED BY A "WALK THROUGH" AND REFRESHMENTS WOULD CONSTITUTE THE PROGRAM. THIS PROPOSAL WOULD GET OVER THE HURDLE OF TITLES AND SPEECHES, BUT WOULD TEND TO OBSCURE OFFICIAL EMBASSY INVOLVEMENT

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 01787 04 OF 04 111351Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CU-04 L-03 CPR-01 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 BERLIN 01787

IN AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EXHIBIT, AND IS CONTRARY
TO OUR PUBLIC AFFAIRS POSTURE.

15. OF THE FOREGOING OPTIONS, WE THINK OPTION B
WOULD BEST SERVE OUR OVERALL INTERESTS. ON THE ASSUMPTION
WE WILL BE TALKING WITH KULTURBUND OFFICIALS AS EARLY AS
MONDAY, MARCH 13, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE BY 00B
MARCH 13 IF POSSIBLE GUIDANCE ON WHICH ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS
DEPT WISHES US TO PURSUE.

16. WE ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE DEPT MAY WISH TO
CONSIDER SUGGESTING TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY THAT IT
POSTPONE THE MARCH 13 SIGNING OF THE DRESDEN ART EXHIBIT
CONTRACT. WHILE WE REALIZE THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED
IN THIS, WE THINK THE GDR WOULD QUICKLY GET THE POINT,
AND PERHAPS MAKE IT MORE AMENABLE TO A SATISFACTORY
SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT PROBLEM.

17. WE ALSO RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT CALL IN
AMBASSADOR SEIBER TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER AND TO FURTHER
DEMONSTRATE OUR CONCERN. WHILE WE DO NOT DISCUSS BERLIN
MATTERS WITH THE GDR, AMBASSADOR PREPARED TO CONVEY OUR
POSITION AT THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL IF DEPART-
MENT FEELS THIS APPROPRIATE. WE ASSUME THAT THE QUESTION
OF TITLE WAS AGREED TO AT THE TIME OF ESTABLISHING
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY DOCUMENTA-
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PAGE 02 BERLIN 01787 04 OF 04 111351Z

TION AVAILABLE IN THE DEPARTMENT TO SUBSTANTIATE THIS
POINT. BOLEN

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